

FA TROPHY LUCK CHANGES

BLUES HOME

AT LAST!

AT LAST the luck of the draw in the FA Trophy has turned for Wycombe Wanderers. With never a home draw since the Trophy was introduced since the Amateur Cup competition was abandoned in 1975, they were looking to Dame Fortune to do better for them.

And she did. The Wanderers came out of the hat first in Tuesday's draw to meet fellow Berger Isthmian Leaguers Barking at Loakes Park on January 13.

Generally, Wycombe have had long, expensive journeys to meet stiff Northern opposition. This year they have a sorely needed chance to advance in the competition, though free-scoring Barking will be anything but a pushover.

Financially, if for no other reason, the Wanderers need a good cup run, having been ousted at the first hurdle from the FA Cup a couple of weeks back when they lost by the only goal to Southern Leaguers Maidstone — albeit unluckily.

The two sides have already met — at Barking towards the end of September, when they drew 2-2. Then, after conceding a soft goal in the first five minutes of the game, Wycombe recovered to lead at the interval by goals from Stewart Atkins in the 15th and 19th minutes.

Like Wycombe, Barking are still among the

leaders in the league. Their scoring rate is much better than Wycombe's, who have consistently failed to capitalise on territorial advantage and chances in front of goal, but the Wanderers have a better defensive record.

Barking, currently below the Wanderers in the league table, have a sackful of games in hand — they have played only 17 to Wycombe's 23. They have lost only three, drawing four. They have had their best-ever run in the FA Cup tourney and have a home first-round tie against Aldershot.

Two months' ban

One piece of bad news reached them this week — winger Laurie Abrahams, who was for a time with Charlton, appeared before an FA disciplinary committee last week charged with striking the referee in an Essex and Herts Border League game earlier this season. He received a two-month suspension and was fined £10.

Generally, Wycombe officials are happy with the draw, which should attract a sizeable crowd.

Mr Brian Lee told the Free Press after the draw on Tuesday: "It's the sort of draw we have been hoping for, and it's up to us to take our chance. Clearly it is much better to have them here, but they have scored a lot of goals and will take some beating."